



COLUMBUS CITY COUNCIL

TAVARES TIMES NEWS

From the Office of Councilmember Charleta B. Tavares

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 5 MAY 2010

WELCOME

May is the perfect time to get active and make healthy choices for you and your family. Staying active is one reason that Columbus City Council will join Franklin County Board of Commissioners and The Ohio House of Representatives in recognizing Visitability Awareness Week, from May 9-17. Visitability is a movement that encourages new and remodeled homes to be built so they are accessible to people with limited mobility. What this means is that at least one entrance does not require a stair step, slightly wider hallways and doorways on the first floor, and a bathroom that is large enough to allow a person using a walker or wheelchair to close the door. These simple building standards provide tremendous social benefits to friends and family who need them.

May is also National Bike Month, which is a great time to remind the people of Columbus that we have a safety helmet law which I sponsored, that requires children under 18 to wear a helmet when they ride their bike or scooter. It is also an opportunity for adults to be good role models for children and young adults and wear helmets, too. Watch for Neighborhood Pride Festivals and other opportunities at summer events to get children and teens fitted for a free bike helmet from Nationwide Children's Hospital and The Columbus Blue Jackets.

Also included in this newsletter is information on my efforts to help stabilize neighborhoods through the abandoned housing proposal I have worked on with City Attorney Rick Pfeiffer and others, to address neighborhood blight, housing abandonment and code violations that affect Columbus and cities across the country. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, I encourage you to contact my office by calling James Ragland at (614) 645-8580 or by email at jcragland@columbus.gov.



Sincerely,
Charleta B. Tavares
Charleta B. Tavares

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PAGE TWO

- ◆ Councilmembers Tavares and Tyson visit Washington to hear from Top Decision Makers
- ◆ Health, Housing and Human Development Committee Meetings

PAGE THREE

- ◆ Abandoned Housing Draft Legislation
- ◆ Civil and Women's Rights Pioneer Remembered

PAGE FOUR

- ◆ Council hosts the Ray Miller Institute for Change and Leadership
- ◆ Legislative Watch

INSTITUTE FOR ACTIVE LIVING



Gardening season has begun and the current climate is perfect for growing your own vegetables and fruits. The Institute for Active Living, a program of Columbus Public Health, has resources available to help people understand the health benefits of growing their own food, as well as tips on how to grow produce even when you don't have ample space for a garden; containers on a porch or even near a window can grow valuable, fresh herbs and produce that can be used to make healthy, affordable meals.

"Growing vegetables at home or in a community garden not only gives a person control of what is applied to the food, it also can encourage better food choices," said Councilmember Charleta Tavares. "Community pride, social networking and teaching our children about proper nutrition are also some of the benefits of backyard or community gardening".



Activity on Gay Street in Downtown Columbus

For more information, please visit www.publichealth.columbus.gov

COUNCILMEMBERS TAVARES AND TYSON VISIT WASHINGTON TO HEAR FROM TOP DECISION MAKERS



National League of Cities

With Congress working fervently on several pieces of legislation to spur job creation and encourage economic recovery, Columbus City Councilmembers Charleta Tavares and Priscilla Tyson joined local officials from across the nation in Washington, DC, for the National League of Cities' (NLC) 2010 Congressional City Conference.

In addition to job creation and economic stabilization, other local priorities discussed during the conference included strengthening and stabilizing the housing market, investing in transportation infrastructure, and supporting local energy efficiency and conservation efforts.

Attendees heard from a number of administration officials who discussed the President's agenda. Members also had the opportunity to meet with their federal representatives in the House and Senate to discuss economic conditions in cities and to urge support for the Local Jobs for America Act, HR 4812.

"With so many cities and towns struggling to make ends meet, the National League of Cities' conference provides us with the tools and resources we need to find solutions at home," said Councilmember Tavares. "In my many years of involvement with the National League of Cities, I have cultivated many great relationships with other local leaders, had the opportunity to meet with my congressional representatives to call for immediate federal action on jobs and economic development and shared Columbus' innovative programs, policies and initiatives. I am happy that my colleague on Columbus City Council, Councilmember Tyson, is joining me in this effort."

"As the economic conditions for cities continue to worsen and more cities struggle to meet their needs, it is imperative that we see federal legislation which will create jobs and establish a foundation for long-term growth," said Ronald O. Loveridge, NLC president and mayor of Riverside, California. "Cities across America have come to Washington in search of solutions to their most pressing needs –from each other, and from the federal government."

The conference also included other educational, networking, and strategy sessions devoted to healthier cities, education, public safety, and emergency management. For Councilmember Tyson, chair of Council's development committee, this comprehensive approach is crucial to strengthening our nation's cities, including Columbus.

There is no single, simple prescription for protecting and strengthening our cities, but there are core principles that can serve as our guide," said Tyson. "We need to encourage economic development by supporting social and business entrepreneurs, educating our young people, and promoting arts and culture, all while keeping our cities and their residents safe. In these difficult times, cities and their governments need to work with the private sector to create and retain good jobs. Councilmember Tavares and I take that responsibility very seriously."

The Congressional City Conference is the annual legislative meeting of the National League of Cities, designed to inform municipal leaders about federal policy issues while providing an opportunity for city leaders to bring local concerns to their federal elected officials in Washington, DC.

The National League of Cities is the nation's oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

HEALTH, HOUSING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS



Future dates of Councilmember Tavares' Health & Human Development Committee / Housing Committee are listed below. Meeting time and location is 5:30 p.m. in the Columbus City Council Chambers. A picture ID is needed to enter City Hall. Visit www.columbuscitycouncil.org/tavares for more information and agendas.

- ◆ Wednesday, May 5, 2010
- ◆ Wednesday, May 19, 2010
- ◆ Wednesday, June 2, 2010
- ◆ Wednesday, June 16, 2010

ABANDONED HOUSING DRAFT LEGISLATION

To help confront the problem of vacant and abandoned houses in Columbus neighborhoods, Councilmember Charleta B. Tavares and City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. have proposed legislation to zero-in on absent investors who leave structures on their property in disrepair.

"These abandoned properties are a source of frustration for neighboring property-owners," said Councilmember Charleta Tavares. "Not only do they present safety concerns for residents, they also depress property values in surrounding areas and create negative neighborhood perceptions. I, along with City Attorney Pfeiffer, are looking to assist responsible property owners who have sent out a call for help."

This effort, combined with Columbus' recent award of \$23,200,773 from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP2) grant funds under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, will help stabilize Columbus neighborhoods.



A public hearing is forthcoming on the draft language. Please call (614) 645-8580 or write jcragland@columbus.gov for more information or to provide comments and recommendations.

The Disappearing Real Property Owner Law *DRAFT* Language

In the event the City determines that a code violation exists on a particular parcel of real property and attempts to serve on the owner of that parcel notice of the code violation by Certified-Mail-Return-Receipt Requested at the owner's address listed in the public records maintained by the Franklin County Auditor, and the envelope containing the notice is returned with an endorsement showing failure of delivery, and the City by affidavit demonstrates that the residence of the owner is not known and cannot be ascertained with reasonable diligence, taken together those two conditions shall be evidence that the parcel of real property constitutes a public nuisance.

In those instances where there has been a failure of service as described above, and where the City by affidavit demonstrates that the residence of the owner is not known and cannot be ascertained with reasonable diligence, should the City subsequently file a criminal charge against the owner for the code violation, such violation shall be charged as a first-degree misdemeanor offense, and upon conviction, if the owner is an individual and the property was not owner-occupied, there shall be a mandatory 10-day jail sentence and a mandatory \$1,000 fine. If the owner is other than an individual, there shall be a mandatory \$5,000 fine.

CIVIL AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS PIONEER REMEMBERED



Dorothy Height, an icon of the American civil rights movement who worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., died on April 20, 2010 just a month after her 98th birthday. Dorothy Height headed the National Council of Negro Women for more than 50 years, and was a strong voice for the role of black families. She was also a principle planner of the civil rights march on Washington.

"Dr. Dorothy Height worked tirelessly throughout her life for the rights of blacks and women, and was a true inspiration," said Councilmember Charleta Tavares. "Let her be remembered now, and throughout history, as an important pioneer who fought intolerance and helped improve the lives of so many."

Height, who received numerous honorary doctorate degree, was one of only a handful of Americans to receive both the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.



COLUMBUS CITY COUNCIL

Office of
Councilmember Charleta B. Tavares

City Hall
90 West Broad Street
Second Floor
Columbus, OH 43215
www.columbuscitycouncil.org/tavares

Legislative Aide: James Ragland
Email: jcragland@columbus.gov
Phone: (614) 645-8580
Fax: (614) 645-7399

Scheduler: Jackie Whitworth
Email: jawhitworth@columbus.gov
Phone: (614) 645-7317

Newsletter Contributors
Thomas Diamond
Kelli Arthur Hykes

CITY COUNCIL HOSTS THE RAY MILLER INSTITUTE FOR CHANGE AND LEADERSHIP



Councilmember Charleta B. Tavares recently hosted students from the Ohio State University's Ray Miller Institute for Change and Leadership in City Council Chambers. The Institute, founded by State Senator Ray Miller and sponsored by the Ohio State University was designed to cultivate the knowledge and skills necessary for effective leadership by providing training in critical areas of need.

"It is imperative to the success of our city that we, as the current community leaders, groom the next generation of leadership to be not just the voice but agents for change and advancement for our community," said Councilmember Tavares. "The Ray Miller Institute for Change and Leadership is the perfect vehicle to mold these leaders."

For more information about the Ray Miller Institute for Change and Leadership, please visit: <http://aaascec.osu.edu/programs/>

LEGISLATIVE WATCH

FUNDING SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES: The City of Columbus partners with a number of highly dedicated social service agencies that help thousands of Columbus residents. Health and Human Development Committee Chair Charleta B. Tavares recently sponsored legislation that will provide funding for 42 organizations as they work to meet the needs of their clients. Ordinance 0549-2010 authorizes the Department of Development to enter into contracts worth \$2,906,100.00. The legislation targets social service agencies that provide help to families and households through access to day care, substance abuse prevention programs, refugee and resettlement programs, senior care, mediation services, services for the disabled, material assistance and food programs, workforce development, and youth programs. The legislation authorizes the expenditure of \$789,872.00 from the Emergency Human Services Fund and \$2,116,228.00 from the General Fund for a total of \$2,906,100.00.

UPCOMING LEGISLATION

PROVIDING SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES: Each year, the city of Columbus receives funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to create affordable housing for low and moderate income families under the HOME Investment Partnerships Act. Housing Committee Chair Charleta B. Tavares is sponsoring ordinance 0623-2010, which will authorize the appropriation of \$5,006,538.00 from the 2010 HOME Fund to the Department of Development. The funds will assist first-time homebuyers, for-profit and non-profit organizations with grants and no or low interest loans for projects designed to increase and preserve the local supply of decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing for low and moderate income families.

To receive the **Tavares Times News** directly by ground mail or e-mail call (614) 645-8580 or email jcragland@columbus.gov